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NOTES AND QUERIES.

FOLK-LORE AT THE COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION. — If the Anthropological Building has been late in completion, the display is now most interesting. The value and curiosity of the archæological exhibits will first attract attention ; but those more closely connected with folk-lore are well worthy of notice. An account is elsewhere printed of the cases devoted to the presentation of objects used in games. A very curious and complete exhibition of objects connected with Chinese worship in America is made by the Archæological Department of the University of Pennsylvania ; and the curator, Mr. Stewart Culin, shows in his own name an interesting gathering of books used by the same people in this country. The place which toys may be made to take in museums illustrating folk-lore is well shown by a collection of toys representing Chinese and Japanese musical instruments by the same exhibitors. Mr. G. F. Kunz of New York exhibits a collection of precious stones, or valuable objects, employed as amulets, or with superstitious purposes. The Australian display contains illustrations of the Bora initiation ceremonies, and that of Africa representations of disguises employed in sacred rites not yet explained. As connected with mythology, the totem poles and carvings of the Haida of British Columbia will be observed. In the Government Building, Mr. Frank Hamilton Cushing has constructed a model of a Zuñi priest engaged in the celebration of the creation-myth. Outside of the exhibition buildings, the Midway Plaisance offers a continued spectacle of various life. The Javanese theatre is especially to be mentioned, as worthy of description and study.

THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL CONGRESS. — In the end, the plan of this Congress was so far altered that the arrangement in separate sections was abandoned. The Congress devoted to Folk-lore but one afternoon, on August 29, given to the Collection of Games in the Anthropological Building, and one morning, August 31, when a certain number of papers were presented. As these papers will hereafter appear in the proceedings of the Congress, it will not be necessary here to give an account of them. The attendance at the Congress, as at most of the scientific congresses, was limited ; but the occasion was found pleasant by those who took part. Persons desirous to obtain the printed proceedings may send the subscription price (\$5.00) to Mr. C. Staniland Wake, Department of Ethnology, Columbian Exposition, Chicago, Ill.

ALDEGONDA, THE FAIRY OF JOY. AN ITALIAN TALE. — In a well-written editorial, or leader-review, in the "London Chronicle," of the book entitled "Rabbit the Voodoo," by Miss Mary Owen, the writer, in referring to my introduction to the latter work, intimated that I could probably not distinguish between what was American Indian and original Negro superstition or tradition, because savage races have the same bases of custom and belief. This view, like many others current among theorizing folklorists, is to a great extent deceptive. What were the absolute beginnings

of anything in Nature, only Omnipotence can tell, — yet this is what folk-lorists for the most part seek, trying to dig a well with a needle, and neglecting what is for the time being their proper work, — namely, identifying, with given phases of culture, what belongs to each.

A tradition, when it has received color, and, as one may say, size and form, so that it manifestly belongs to a certain *cultus*, has to the mere beginnings, which men hunt so zealously through variants, exactly the same proportion as some beautiful cathedral to its deeply buried foundation or crypt. I have with my own eyes seen an English clergyman demolish the greater portion of a very fine and well-preserved Perpendicular church, because he had unfortunately dug out of the whitewash a solitary little, old, and unornamented Early English window, or rather peep-hole. The whole church was forthwith “restored” into Early English! He will not idly read this tale — *non modicam ex hoc demetes frugem* — who will reflect that any grubber can collect out of books and pile up variants, but that to grasp the grandeur and glory of tradition and to feel its spirit is the real mission of learning.

I have been lately reminded of this manifest impression of time on the form of a legend by examining several traditions which had been collected for me, in Florence, by a woman alluded to in my “Etruscan Roman Traditions.” She is ever impecunious, and when reduced to living on air, like the wolves of François Villon, waylays me in the road, when a few francs change owner, and a promise is passed that traditional folk-lore shall be collected and written, as an equivalent. Then my agent goes about, among old women, into Florentine slums, and out into peasant homes, and anon delivers to me sheets of note-paper on which, in very pronounced Tuscan, is written a tale or two, *cosa* being given as *chavusa*, and many words divided, the first half tacked to its predecessor, and the last half to its follower, as certain worms, when dissected, amicably unite with pieces of their neighbors.

When I lately met my collector, she was, by her own account, going full speed to utter ruin, — *ad inopiam, velis remisque properat*, — with all sail set. She had been cited to be fined by the police, her landlord had warned her for a month’s arrears, all her clothes were in pawn, — she had in the world only a cent, and that was counterfeit. Result — five francs surrendered, and a week after sundry writings received.

One of these was called Oldegonda (Aldegonda), the Spirit of Joy. That there might be no mistake, the writer had put a real ivy leaf in the MS., partly to serve as an object lesson, and partly to aid in conjuring the Spirit, or in attracting her favor. And thus ran the legend of Oldegonda, *la fata della Ellera (allegria)*, or the Fairy of Joy: —

Oldegonda, or Aldegonda, fairy of the country (*della campagna*), was found in a field when but a few days old. One day a contadino, passing by a forest, discovered a little animal which clung to his leg, and this creature was a hedge-hog, which led him to a mass of ivy, in which he found sleeping a beautiful little infant girl. Taking it home to his wife, he bade her treat it as their own child, and also be kind to the little animal, — che non

le maneba altro che la favella, — who needed only speech to show a human soul.

But the woman disobeyed her husband, and was wont to kick the hedge-hog, and neglect Aldegonda, as the foundling had been called. For the woman had a daughter of her own, who grew in ugliness with every year, even as Aldegonda grew in beauty and gentleness, so that the former hated the latter with all her heart. And one day, when they were in the woods, the little hedge-hog led Aldegonda to the piles of ivy, where she sat in state. But the daughter of the peasant, seized with jealous rage, that the hedge-hog was only attentive to the other, cried, —

Siete due stregone !
 Tu sei le bella strega
 La strega dell' ellera !
 E tu spinone,
 Tu sei il stregone !

Ye be sorcerers twain, I trow :
 Beautiful witch of Joy be thou :
 And thou, great beast with many a thorn,
 A wizard, same as I am born !

Saying this, she seized the hedge-hog and threw him into the stream.

Now the hedge-hog was a young prince who had been cursed by a sorcerer or witch to remain in the form of an animal, until some one should cause him a violent death. With his fate was linked the love of Aldegonda. Therefore, when he sank into the water, the spell was broken ; he rose, and gained the green bank of the forest, as a beautiful youth in splendid attire. And addressing the peasant girl, he said, —

Thou among witches
 Shalt be the most malignant,
 Thou who couldst never do one good action
 Shall be an accursed cat,
 But my beautiful Aldegonda
 Shall be the lovely fairy,
 The Fairy of Joy,
 (And he who wishes a favor)
 Shall call her with these words :

O beautiful Aldegonda,
 Fair fairy of Joy !
 By all which thou didst suffer !
 For the time of twenty years,
 From these peasant women,
 As did thy hedge-hog lover,
 Now that this is over,
 And he is thy husband,
 Bestow, I pray, a favor !
 As with this leaf of ivy
 I make a sign of the cross,
 Which thou wilt surely grant !
 I beg thee of thy grace,

Make my love return unto me !
Which thou wilt not deny ;
I pray for luck in my home,
Which thou also wilt not deny.

And the sign of the cross must thus be made thrice, and the invocation every time repeated.

This tale, I may observe, is not of the popular traditional type of Grimm and Perrault, but belongs to the dark lore current among witches and sorcerers, in which the story, although always ancient, is a mere frame for the ceremony and incantation. The marked difference between these narratives and mere *märchen* is very striking, because the former are in all cases guarded jealously, as profound and even awful secrets or formulas. I know an English lady of Italian life, *i. e.*, one born of Anglo-Italian parentage — who has for a long time been “in with the witches,” and she has never yet been able to get her most intimate *strega* to converse on sorcery, or repeat a line of a legend, except in the open air, far away from profane hearing. One reason for this is that all such stories, especially the incantations, are generally sung. This is done in a very peculiar tone of voice. It sometimes requires years to get the right intonation which renders a certain incantation effective. Therefore, if one were to be heard singing *alla strega*, or in witch tunes, to a young lady, there would be a “difficulty.”

Charles Godfrey Leland.

FLORENCE, ITALY, 1893.

THE BURIAL OF THE WREN. — I inclose a version of the song of the wren, a little different from the one printed in a recent number of the Journal. The variant is contributed by a young Irishman from Skibbereen. But why is the wren called the “king of all birds,” and what is the meaning of the song?

Mrs. Lucien Howe, Buffalo, N. Y.

The wren, the wren, the king of all birds,
St. Stephen's day it was caught in the furze ;
Although it is little, its family is great.
Cheer up my landlady and fill us a treat,
And if you fill it of the best,
In heaven I hope your soul will rest ;
But if you fill it of the small,
It won't agree with the wren boys at all.
Sing holly, sing ivy, sing ivy, sing holly,
To sing a bad Christmas is all but a folly.
On Christmas day I turned the spit,
I burned my fingers, I feel it yet ;
Between the finger and the thumb,
There lies a big blister, as large as a plum.
I hunted my wren five miles or yon,
Through hedges, ditches, briars, and bushes I knocked him down.
So here he s, as you may see,
Upon the top of a holly-tree.